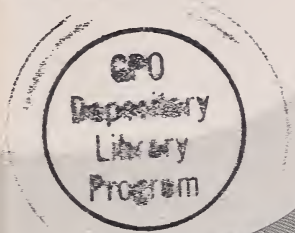


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TRUMPETER ANS

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JUN 03 1994



"A Closer Look"



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Intermountain
Region

Ogden
Utah



Photo by P. G. Mickelson

THE COMEBACK WAS DRAMATIC...

THE TRUMPETER SWANS

Trumpeter swans—largest of all the North American wildfowl—were once pushed to the edge of extinction. Fortunately, a few trumpeters survived in the remote areas of the tri-state region of Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana and—with added protection—staged a dramatic comeback.

Trumpeter swans historically bred throughout the north, west, and central parts of North America from Alaska and arctic Canada through northern and eastern Idaho, south to Missouri, and east to Indiana. Principal wintering sites included the Atlantic and Pacific estuaries, the Mississippi and Ohio River Valleys, and the Texas Gulf Coast to Mexico.

Extensive use of this magnificent bird for food and plumage by the early settlers and the destruction of the

swans' habitat began their decline. It was the commercial swan-skin trade, however, that virtually eliminated the trumpeters outside of Alaska. The harvest was so thorough that by the early 1900's survival of wild trumpeters in the continental United States was questionable.

A few remnant pairs did survive in the tri-state region where warm springs provided ice-free stretches of river throughout the coldest winters. These birds, plus a small number that were discovered in Alberta, were the sole survivors south of Alaska.

HELP FOR THE TRUMPETERS

Efforts to prevent the further decline of the birds were instigated in the 1930's. Numerous factors limit the complete recovery of the bird to its historic range and abundance:

- Availability of food on wintering sites
- Severe winter weather
- Loss of suitable breeding habitat and traditions to historic wintering areas
- Predators
- Shooting
- Diseases and Parasites



Interagency studies are essential to correct the limiting factors affecting swans.



In recent years there has been a noticeable decline in the success of nesting swans.



Photo by Jeff Foott



Photo by Jeff Foott

"SWAN ACTION" is a Forest Service wildlife habitat proposal to help ensure the continued survival of the trumpeter swan in the tri-state region.

SWAN ACTION

The reproductive status of the tri-state trumpeter swan population is currently of concern. The Forest Service, in conjunction with other agencies, is actively seeking to secure and enhance swan habitat. Through a program called SWAN ACTION, the Forest Service integrates studies and management to identify and correct limiting factors.

Proper coordination of all the resource uses is another aspect of the SWAN ACTION program. Some trumpeters are sensitive to human disturbances. Land management practices such as leaving or planting buffer strips of cover, closing roads, and proper timing of other resource activities will enhance swan habitat.

The SWAN ACTION program objective is to insure that the clarion call of the trumpeter swan will continue to ring!

HABITAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE





Intensive investigation of the swan's nesting habitats on the Bridger-Teton and Targhee National Forests is currently underway. This study is analyzing water chemistry, aquatic vegetation, aquatic invertebrates, lake morphology, and nest site characteristics of both occupied and unoccupied lakes. The results should help resource managers to better understand how they may improve trumpeter swan habitats. For example, (1) alteration of water depths in some lakes enhances their suitability for nesting, (2) artificial nesting platforms have been provided where flooding frequently destroys traditional nests.



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